

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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"THE LAIRD O' COCKPEN."

By "RITA."

Author of "*Dame Durdan*," "*Gretchen*," "*Darby and Joan*," "*Sheba*," etc., etc.

CHAPTER III. THE CIRCLE OF FIDELITY.

"ANYTHING does for Corriemoor!"

Had it come to that already? I began to think so. No one seemed to take any interest in what one wore, or how one looked. Sometimes I put on one of my pretty trousseau gowns, but I might as well have worn sackcloth for any notice that it aroused. The Laird had but two ideas of colour—black and white. When one was young, one ought to wear the latter; when middle-aged and old, the former. Mrs. Campbell was of opinion that married women should never wear bright colours, and therefore I concluded her silence on the subject of my gowns argued disapproval.

I seldom troubled now about them. Dark serge or homespun suited best the mountain climate and the rough moorland roads. When the weather allowed of it I rode for hours together—as often as not by myself, though that proceeding was the subject of grave disapprobation also. It was the only pleasure I had, and the Laird had given me a beautiful little thoroughbred mare, with whom I was perfectly at home, and who would carry me like a bird over the rough, wild country, making light of gates and fences that came in our way.

I had determined that Bella should come back with me when I left Inverness. I felt that for once in my life I must assert myself—that I could not go back and

plunge into the dreariness and dullness of Corriemoor without some temporary relief.

My stay with Grannie was nearly over. The afternoon after I had met Douglas Hay I was sitting by her side in the little drawing-room, idling with some fanciful embroidery that never seemed to make much progress in my hands. I had mentioned my meeting with Douglas, and his intention to call. I wondered whether he would do so, and if he would bring that strange-looking friend of his with him.

Grannie reclined in her easy-chair; a bright fire burned in the grate, for the spring days were still cold for an invalid. Her worn, patient face looked very sweet with its close, lace cap, and bands of silver hair. Her folded hands lay on her lap, looking very white and thin in contrast with her plain, black gown.

I watched her for some time in silence. I was wondering how long it would be before I, too, could win the patience and resignation that made life so calm and restful for her.

"Grannie," I said, at last, seating myself on the stool at her feet, and leaning my head against her knee, "have you had very much trouble in your life?"

"Why do you ask that, my bairn?" she said, meeting my upturned eyes with kindly wonder.

"I don't know why, exactly, only your face looks as if it had known a great deal of care and sorrow; and yet you are so patient—I've never heard you complain."

"The Lord has been very good to me," she said, gently. "I'll not deny that sometimes the stripes of affliction were heavy and hard to bear; but strength is aye given to those who seek it aright, and I learnt to be patient and content at last.

The worst trial was my gude-man's death; I always call him that, my bairn—no name ever suited him so well. He was a gude-man to me; and I often think that I must have been a sore trial and burden to him, for I was a young, feckless thing when I married, and scarcely knew the worth or meaning of a true and patient love. Then we had many trials—loss of children, health, money; but never from his lips came a word of complaint or a murmur of discontent. After he died, I only knew the true meaning of the word 'loneness.' Oh, that was a bitter and weariful time! to wake in the grey dawns and know no cheering voice could greet me, no kind hand give its strong and safe support again! Ah, Athole, my bairn, Heaven spare you ever such a trial! When two have been one, and between them comes the darkness and silence which no power on earth may rend asunder, that is the thing that breaks one down, and teaches how helpless and how weak we are."

I was silent; I thought that I, too, had known something of that pain, and darkness, and silence; its cloud had never really lifted from off my life. Passive endurance had followed passionate pain; coldness had grown up where once fervid, palpitating, tremulous love had filled heart and soul to overflowing.

This dreaded thing that she called "loneness"—did I not know it, too? Surely my pain might equal hers, seeing that at least her love had died no death of unworthiness—that always it would be with her in the tender grace and ceaseless reverence of the memory that shrined it as its holiest treasure.

"Tell me more," I said, huskily, as I bent my head on her lap. "I want to know how to bear life when it gets hard and—and difficult; when everything seems at war within our souls."

"But my little lassie has no need to ask that—yet," she said, tenderly, as she laid her frail hand on my bowed head. "Trial and trouble have not touched you very heavily, Athole—only the fretfulness and impatience of youth against its own mistakes, or rebellion against a life that is not just what one would have it. Youth is ever so, my bairn; but every year will teach you patience and forbearance, and bring new duties in its train."

I shivered as I rested there in the warm firelight.

It is so easy for the old to preach; so

hard for the young to believe. The years might come and go as they pleased; they could never again bring the gladness to my heart that is like sunshine to the day. But if there would only come to me peace, rest, quiet; if I could cease to rebel, cease to desire, cease to think!

It was thought that distracted and troubled me; the perpetual conflict, the unending questioning, the consciousness of desires unattainable and persistent, the ceaseless "why, why, why" that made of life, love, duty, religion, a torture of doubts that nothing set at rest.

Blessed are those who can accept without question—to whom Faith is as easy as Life, when the one serves the purpose of the other, and is accepted as its best gift.

I was not like these contented and unseeking natures; I knew it—I had always known it—and for me life could not but hold tragedy, and sorrow, and remorse. Even as I leant there against Grannie's knees in the old, childish way, even as I listened to the sweet patience of her voice, and the kind gentleness of her words, I knew in my heart that she would be terrified and horror-struck could she read my mind, could she know the wild turbulence of feeling, the scarce restrained impatience, the ceaseless, racking torture of doubt and desire that there held unholy revel.

Yet I was not willingly thus. I would have been glad enough to believe as she believed, to accept as she accepted, to emulate the patience and steadfastness of her nature. Only by what force—moral or mental—was I to accomplish such a task? To me it only seemed that life held

Neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help from pain.

I did not desire its continuance, but I did wish to know more of its meaning—to know why it was forced unasked and undesired upon humanity; why we were all flung and tossed about on its shifting currents like a pack of badly shuffled cards; why, ever and always throughout the length and breadth of the globe we called Earth, there rang one ceaseless cry of pain, which never seemed to win response or pity, which, with its vain appeal, mocked every faith and form to which men clung with bleeding hands, which at last Death loosed and folded over silent breast and pulseless heart, between the dark and dawn of an ended day.

But had I spoken thus, where could I have met with comprehension in the narrow circle to which I was restricted? Pity and wonder I might find in abundance; tears and prayers for a better frame of mind, or that I might be brought to see things in the "true light"—the light which to me seemed no more true than the hopes based upon it. I could only endure passively to the end. I would not vex this kind and simple soul by the confession of doubts and misgivings such as these.

The sands were running low in Time's hour-glass. Not by word or deed of mine should their passage be troubled or perplexed; I loved her too dearly for that. If she believed that I was happy, that the comforts and luxuries of my new home were all I desired in the new life I had accepted, I would not disturb that belief.

A loud knock at the front door startled me from the dreamy sadness of that long silence.

Grannie had fallen asleep. The afternoon was waning, the room was half in shadow, save where the flames sent flickering gleams and flashes from time to time.

I rose to my feet as the door opened. It was not hard to guess the visitor—not so hard as to meet the quick flash of those dark blue eyes with the cold greeting of conventionality.

"Grannie is asleep," I said; "but I dare say she will soon wake. Will you sit near the fire? Why have you not brought Mr. Penryth?"

"I was afraid Mrs. Lindsay might not care to see strangers in her state of health," he said.

The cold, measured tones of the familiar voice fell strangely on my ear.

To think that we should be here again, in this same room, at this same hour of dusk and firelight, and yet what worlds apart we seemed! He seated himself by the window, and I went back to my old chair.

"She is still very weak," I said, nodding in the direction of the quiet figure. "This illness has tried her very severely."

"I am sorry to hear it. She was very kind to me," he added, irrelevantly. "But I always think I was not a favourite of hers. I wonder if she could believe in my reformation?"

"Have you reformed?" I asked, quickly. "In what way?"

"In all ways, if reformation means to do nothing one used to do, and care for

nothing for which one used to care, to have grown old in feelings, and cold in affections. I feel like a stranger here. I felt like a stranger in my father's house, and yet it is but two years since I left the place."

"Two years can be very long under some circumstances," I said.

"You have not found them so, I suppose?" he answered, looking at me with sudden and embarrassing scrutiny. "Your life has been fortunate and happy. I wonder whether mine will ever be more than an aimless dream."

"It ought to be," I said, my voice hard and cold with stern restraint; "you have been successful—what does a man need more? With wealth, and youth, and strength of will, you can scarcely call life aimless."

"Are you happy, Athole?" he asked with startling abruptness, and leaning suddenly forward.

The light of the leaping flames shone upon my face, and found me unprepared for their too candid revelation.

"I—why do you ask?" I said, drawing back into the gloom once more. "Is there any reason why I should not be so?"

"Only one," he said, sternly, "if there were any truth or constancy in woman."

"Perhaps," I said, "you will mention that reason. I will tell you if it applies to my case."

"It is not one that need trouble you," he said, with a fierce bitterness in the low tones of his changed voice. "It is only that you have spoilt all my life for me; only that you have taught me the true meaning of the word despair; only that your harsh judgement, however deserved, has poisoned every hour of my life since last I saw you. But that cannot matter now—I am a fool to confess it. But, oh, Athole—Athole, if you were free, and these two years could roll back! I know now what love means to a nature like yours, and I could love you worthily at last. But it is all too late—too late! Why were you so hard on me? Why did you send me from you? My error was only the error of youth—a folly of the senses—never of the heart. Can women never believe the wide difference that lies between those two cases?"

"Hush," I said, entreatingly. "You have no right to say such words. The past is all over and done with. We made a great mistake, you and I. Perhaps I

was too exacting, and you too light. - I do not know; sometimes I have thought so; but there is no use to speak of it now."

"I suppose not," he said; "and yet it was strange, was it not, Athole, that when I have been face to face with death I always saw you, felt you, recognised you as the one want of my life. I grew certain enough of my feelings when it was too late for the certainty to be of any use."

"What use to tell me of such things?" I said, coldly. "We both made a mistake once; you in promising, I in believing too much. It can do no good to refer to it. All the sorrow and remorse in the world won't give back one of those days and hours."

"Would you have one back if you could?" he said, his voice low and eager, his eyes looking back to mine with the old remembered look.

A sense of passionate indignation rose in my heart. How dared he speak to me thus, look at me thus? In the days when I loved and believed in him he had almost broken my heart. That first love had been to me as a religion, so pure it was, so deep in faith. It had been turned to shame, doubt, despair. And to speak of it now—now!

I glanced at the hand lying idly on my lap. By some chance I had forgotten to put on any of the rings I usually wore. The firelight gleamed on one alone—the plain gold band that symbolised my marriage.

"You don't answer," he said, presently.

I looked at him coldly and defiantly, then lifted my hand.

"My answer is—there," I said, touching the ring.

CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE OR MARTYRDOM?

THERE was a moment of silence after my last words. I rose, and went over to the fireplace and broke the coals gently into a fuller blaze. The noise woke Grannie as I had hoped it would. She sat up and asked me the time.

At sound of her voice Douglas rose, and came forward into the light of the fire.

"I have come to see you, Mrs. Lindsay," he said, holding out his hand. "I was so sorry to hear of your long illness from—Mrs. Campbell."

Instinctively I started. It was the first time he had called me that, and the name

had a strange, unfamiliar sound spoken by his lips. Grannie seemed delighted to see him, and poured forth endless questions as to his doings and adventures during the last two years. I sat there listening, silently.

Presently Bella bustled in, all gaiety and chatter, and the lamp was lighted, and tea brought, and conversation became general.

It seemed to me that Douglas was very much improved. He was less gay and frivolous, he talked well—almost brilliantly—and listened to Grannie with a deference and sympathy such as he had never been wont to display.

I could not help thinking how much older he looked; but the change was an improvement, seeing that the face had gained in character what it had lost in youth.

"I am going back to Australia," he said, in answer to some question of Grannie's; "I like it, and I like the free and unconventional life."

"You'll be taking to yourself a Colonial wife," said Bella, laughing; "I hear the Australian girls are very beautiful and very charming."

"That may be," he said, curtly; "I don't know any. The only people with whom I was on anything like terms of intimacy were some Scotch folk, with whom Huel and I stayed, and who came home with us. But the daughters, though very pretty, clever girls, were scarcely types of the genuine Australian. They were always very anxious to see their father's native land, and so he brought them over. We parted in Liverpool, but I should never be surprised to see them up North any day. They meant to make a tour of Scotland."

I found myself wondering and speculating about these girls. Were they pretty? Did he like them? Perhaps some day he would marry one of them, and live in that New World which he seemed to appreciate so much. Well, it could not matter to me now what he did or where he went.

Yet a sense of irritation was strong within me as I sat silently there listening to him. Why had he not always been as he was now? If, as he had said, he was capable of loving more worthily, he was also more worthy of being loved. The folly, lightness, and frivolity of youth had changed into the deeper gravity and earnestness of manhood. No years of education could have given him what those two years of hardship, endurance,

work, and privation had given. Had we met now, or had I been less hasty in fettering myself with those chains of duty I felt so heavy and so burdensome, life might have been a very different thing to both of us.

At last he took his leave. Both eyes and hand-clasp were cold for me. I told myself that it was well they should be—well, that between us both some barrier of wrath and indifference should arise and live for ever.

I could not understand why this sudden meeting—this sudden recall of old memories and associations—had been able to affect me thus. I had thought myself so stony, so safe, so cold; and he had seemed to have passed so utterly out of my life—to have entered into such a totally different sphere of action! When I thought of his words, of the look in his eyes as the dancing fire flames had flashed into their depths, I felt a strange and most unholly gladness.

"He suffers now," I told myself. "He knows at last what it is to lose love and hope; to see life turn blank and grey as the years gather round it." All he had given me to bear was recoiling on himself. It was just, and I was glad of it.

Yet presently, when darkness and solitude were with me, and I laid down my aching head and vainly sought to find rest or sleep, I wondered why Fate had played so cruel a trick on me. It would have been so much better not to have met him again—to have felt that silence and distance lay between our parted lives for evermore. How the old sense of loneliness and despair came over me that night! What a useless being I seemed! I had no aim or object in life. What could I do at Corriemoor which had not been done much better by others?

It was not possible to take much interest in snuffy old men and women who talked a scarcely intelligible language, and desired nothing better than their annual gifts of tobacco and whisky from the Laird. There was no absolute poverty or distress upon the whole estate—they were too hardy for sickness; too satisfied with their own spiritual and moral welfare for discontent. If I visited them they were friendly, and not one whit conscious of any favour. They accepted everything as a right, and would advise or suggest actions in a calm and perfectly affable manner which used to astonish me. When they prayed they asked a special blessing

on Corriemoor and all belonging to it, and confidently believed that the blessing would be given.

I was rather patronised and looked down upon. "The young wife up at Corriemoor," they called me, and the old women would lecture me on the imprudence of taking long rides in all weathers, or suggest a more intimate concern in dairy work or household matters, as befitting one connected with that illustrious place. I lay awake now and thought with shuddering dislike of going back to it all; the Laird's placid good-humour; Mrs. Campbell's perpetual lectures and suggestions; the dull, formal dinner-parties; the visits to be paid and received; the books that had to be read and re-read; the dreary Sundays, with the long service at the kirk, and the inevitable discussions and arguments on points of "doctrine" afterwards.

I knew it all so well. I had never so loathed and hated it as I did now. And there was no help, no hope of alteration, from month to month, from year to year. My life was mapped out for me; I could not get away from it—I could only endure.

Well, if numbness was not rest it was better than the rack of pain; I might grow passively content in time.

In time; and yet I had only one hope to breathe, one prayer to pray, "Heaven in mercy keep him from me!"

The next day the Laird came to Inverness. He did not stay at Craig Bank, for there was no accommodation for him in that small domicile, but he put up at the hotel—the same hotel where Douglas and his friend were staying. He came over to see us, brimful of his meeting with them both, and delighted with Huel Penryth, whom he declared to be a man of highly superior intelligence, as well as a fine sportsman.

"If only I could offer him some shooting," he said, regretfully.

"Would you have asked them to Corriemoor if it had been August, or September?" I said, wonderingly.

"Certainly I would," he answered, with a heartiness that showed his hospitable intentions were genuine.

"It is only three months to August; but they are not going to stay here," I said.

"Perhaps they will come back," said the Laird, cheerfully. "Penryth talks of going to Cornwall—that is his native

place—and Hay will accompany him. It seems very odd," he went on, "that in Australia they should have knocked up against an old friend and schoolfellow of mine, Robert M'Kaye; he's a rich man now, and has a cattle station on the Emu River. We have corresponded occasionally. Now he's come over to the old country for a while, and brought his two daughters with him. I must get to see them all, and ask them to Corriemoor. Robert M'Kaye and I were main good friends in our college days; but he was poor, and not over-well placed at home, and had a very adventurous nature. I'm very glad he's been such a successful man. Penryth speaks warmly of him, and his kindness and hospitality; and he's very rich."

"That," I said, somewhat bitterly, "is to sum up all his virtues in a word. Is he coming to Inverness, did you hear?"

"They could not just be sure of that; but he'll be in Glasgow. If I only knew for certain where, I'd make a point of going down to see him. He's staying, so Penryth says."

"Surely Mr. Penryth could ascertain his address?" I said, rather annoyed at the unwonted excitement displayed about these people. "Why don't you ask him?"

He surveyed me somewhat doubtfully.

"I was thinking," he said, "would you be wearying if I left you here a wee bit longer? Then I could run down to Glasgow and ascertain if Mr. M'Kaye has arrived there yet. I know his folk; he's sure to be seeing them, and then, maybe, I could arrange for him to visit us at Corriemoor."

"I should be delighted," I said, eagerly.

Anything in the shape of novelty was delightful to me. The introduction of new faces and friends at Corriemoor promised at least some change in the dull routine of its life.

"Then I'll do that," said the Laird, with almost startling abruptness. "I'll leave for Glasgow to-morrow, and it'll be strange if I don't light upon Robert M'Kaye before a day has passed."

"And I will remain here," I said, "until you return."

"Unless you would like to come there with me?" he said. "You've never seen Glasgow."

"No, and have no wish to," I answered, somewhat hurriedly. "I mean," I added, in apology for my candour, "that I've

always heard it was so dirty, and gloomy, and ugly."

"It's not a very beautiful place," he said; "even the Scotch folk cannot but allow that. You see the coal and iron factories spoil it, and the climate is aye dull and damp. But there's money to be made there, and the wealthy folk can afford to live out of the town and its grime and ugliness. Kelvingrove is very pretty, and one or two of the parks. You're sure you would not care to go with me?"

I shook my head.

"Grannie is not at all strong yet," I said, "and she is very reluctant to lose me. I will stay with her until you return, and," I added, with a courage born of determination, "I have asked Bella Cameron to come back with me to Corriemoor for a while. It is so long since she stayed there."

His face clouded.

"My mother does not like her," he said.

"I am sorry for that," I answered, coldly, "but you can't expect me to order all my affections and tastes to please your mother. As it is, I am a mere cipher in the house, and am never consulted or considered in any way."

His ruddy face paled. He looked at me with a dawning fear in his calm, grey eyes.

"Why, Athole—why, my dear," he said, wonderingly, "you're no meaning to say that you're not satisfied? I thought you and my mother agreed so well."

"So we do," I answered, rather ashamed of my momentary irritation. "You can't disagree with a person to whom you are bound to submit your judgement and inclination even in the smallest matter, and that is what I have to do at Corriemoor."

"I thought you were quite content," he muttered, looking at me as if I had presented myself before him under a totally new aspect.

I laughed somewhat bitterly.

"Oh, I do not wish to change things—they are best as they are; but I think I am at liberty to ask my cousin, or—or any one else to stay with me, if I wish, without your mother's permission."

"Of course, of course," he said, hurriedly. "I'll make that all right with her—and, indeed," he added, as if struck by a brilliant idea, "there's no reason why we shouldn't have some folk to stay at Corriemoor and rouse you up a bit. I'll have the M'Kayses, and perhaps Mr. Penryth,

and young Hay might come to us also. There's room and to spare in the old place, and we'll go up the lochs. You've never been there yet. I can have Lord Monteth's yacht for the asking; he's not using it—he's abroad in Spain this year. I'm pleased I thought of it. No doubt you've been dull and moping at Corriemoor; but we'll cheer you up a bit, and have some young life there. Ay! that we will."

He rubbed his hands together, and his whole face beamed with satisfaction. I was rather taken aback by this new scheme of his. The idea of his inviting Douglas Hay and Huel Penryth to stay at Corriemoor seemed preposterous.

"But they will never accept," I told myself. "Surely Douglas would not dream of staying there—under my roof—as my guest."

I felt so sure of this that I did not trouble myself to combat the Laird's scheme. It would fall to the ground of itself.

The next day he left for Glasgow, and I remained at Craig Bank.

ENGLISH DINNERS IN MÆDIEVAL TIMES.

HEAVY feeders were our forefathers in the days when Alfred was King. At dinner they regaled themselves voraciously on meats, both baked and boiled, which were handed round on spits, each guest taking as much as seemed good to him. They drank freely of mead and ale—brewed without hops—or, if they were well-to-do, of wine—of motat, a drink of mulberry juice and honey—and pigment, a concoction of wine, honey, and spices. While the cups were passing round, harpers and minstrels played and sang; and jugglers and jesters did their fooling when the guests wearied of the more intellectual pastime. It was thus that Alfred entertained Guthrun, the Danish chief, and his thirty jarls after their surrender at Bruton Edge.

Four meals a day—and each so abundant that it might fitly have passed for a dinner—satisfied, more or less fully, the majestic appetites of those early ancestors of ours. Upon this excess of eating, the Danish invaders grafted, as it were, excess of drinking. As everybody knows, King Hardacnut drank himself into an apoplectic fit at the dinner given by Osgood Clapa, at Lambeth, on the occasion of his daughter's wedding.

But neither intemperance in eating nor in drinking was a vice of the Norman. He was less of a glutton and more of an epicure: he liked dainty dishes and savoury, and preferred the light wines of France to the heavy ale-mead or hippocras of England. Edward the Confessor, brought up under Norman influences, introduced into his court Norman usages; and abstemiousness and sobriety prevailed in the place of gluttony and drunkenness. Elsewhere, the English thence ate and drank as immoderately as ever.

William the First had a fine sense of what was becoming at a Royal table. He was so well pleased, at one of his little dinners, with a savoury soup compounded by his cook, Tezelin, that he sent for him and asked how it was named.

"I call it dillagroust," was the reply.

"A poor name for so good a soup!" cried the King. "Nathless"—everybody said "nathless" in those days—"we bestow upon you the Manor of Addington."

This manor, I may add, reverted to the Crown. In the reign of Henry the Third we find it in the hands of the Bardolfs, and held on the tenure of "making pasties in the King's kitchen on the day of his coronation, or providing some one as his deputy, to make a dish called grout; and if suet (seym) was added, it was called malpigernoun." At James the Second's coronation, the lord of the manor claimed to find a man to make a dish of grout in the Royal kitchen, and prayed that the King's cook might be the man. The claim was allowed, and the claimant knighted. But what was this grout? Was it identical with Tezelin's dillagroust, and the Bardolfs' malpigernoun? And was a pottage called Bardolf, of which a fourteenth century recipe has been printed by the Society of Antiquaries, identical with these? If so, as among the ingredients were almond milk, the brawn of capons, sugar and spice, chicken parboiled and chopped, etc., it was doubtlessly a dish for a King.

A story is told of the Conqueror to the effect that when, on one occasion, his favourite noble, William Fitz-Osborne, Earl of Hereford, who, as Steward of the Household, had charge of the cury—or cuisine—served him with the flesh of a crane scarcely half-roasted, he was so indignant that he lifted up his fist, and would have smote him, had not Eudo—appointed dapifer, or steward, immediately afterwards—warded off the blow.

William Rufus did not inherit his father's temperance. He was never so pleased as when he had gathered his boon companions in his Royal hall, to crack coarse jokes over high-spiced meats and kindling wines. He was hunting and feasting at Malwood Keep, in the green recesses of the New Forest, when, one night, after a bout of drinking, he dreamed bad dreams, which vexed him greatly. So a presentiment of evil came upon him, and he told his attendants he would not hunt that day. Dinner, however, was served—his last dinner!—and over his venison pasty and his wine his spirits revived. He ordered his horse to be saddled; mounted, and rode into the greenwood chase, attended by Walter Tyrrel. Drawing his bow, he wounded a stag; and almost at the same moment his breast was pierced by an arrow which Tyrrel had shot at another stag, but which, striking a tree, rebounded, and mortally hit the King. Rufus, in his agony, plucked at the arrow, which snapped off at the shaft, fell from his horse, and "word spake never more."

King Stephen was a good eater and a jolly companion. William of Malmesbury tells us that from his readiness to joke, and sit and regale—that is, dine—with "low people," he had gained so much on their affections as is hardly to be conceived. The "low people" were the citizens of London and the great towns, who abided faithfully by his cause throughout all his troubles.

Henry the Second had no objection to delicate meats and choice liquors. He knew how to maintain a becoming hospitality; but he loved statecraft and the exercise of power much more, and his strong intellect despised the coarser indulgences of the table. A man of restless activity—always on the move—he had little time for feasting, and did not encourage it in others. When the monks of Winchester complained that their Abbot had struck three dishes off their daily carte du diner,

"How many has he left you?" was his enquiry.

"Only ten! only ten!" whined the complainants.

"Ten!" exclaimed the King; "and I am content with three! Tell your Bishop that it is not fitting a monk should have more dishes than a King!"

He and Thomas Becket, before his minister and servant became Archbishop

of Canterbury, had some pleasant dinners together. They were on such intimate terms that Henry would ride straight into the hall where Becket sat at meat, and drink a cup of wine and begone, or would sit down and dine with him, taking "pot-luck," as one might say. Becket, in his secular days, was a good judge of good living, and a very liberal host. His admiring biographer, Fitz-Stephen, says: "He seldom went to dinner without the company of earls and barons, whom he had invited." It was considered to be a proof of his extravagance that he ordered the room in which he received his guests to be strewn every winter day with hay and clean straw, and in summer with fresh green boughs and rushes; so that the numerous knights for whom no seats could be found at the tables, might find the floor clean for their accommodation, and not soil their dainty attire. His board glittered with vessels of gold and silver, and was supplied with rich dishes and rare "drinks"; not that he himself ate or drank to excess, but because he had a natural taste for the sumptuous, and an inborn bountifulness of disposition. When he went on his famous embassy to France, twelve sumpter-horses were required to carry his gold and silver plate, his pitchers, his basins, his salt-cellars, his spoons, his knives, and so on. Two great waggons were stored with iron-bound casks of English beer; others with different kinds of meat and drink; others again with linen for the person and the table. At Paris the gossips with a never-failing subject of conversation; and there is a tradition that he once gave a hundred shillings sterling—equal to fifty or sixty pounds at the present value of money—for a dish of eels. Even after he had become Archbishop, and posed as saint and ascetic, though at times he mortified his flesh upon bread and water, his table was generally spread with fastidious delicacy. He partook of few dishes, and but little of any; but he insisted that those should be choice and well cooked. His usual drink, according to Fitz-Stephen, was water in which fennel had been boiled; but other biographers affirm that he took a little wine for the same reason which induced Saint Paul to recommend it to Timothy.

That crowned knight-errant, whom popular tradition has surrounded with so much fictitious romance—Richard, surnamed the Lion-Heart—loved good dinners.

At his coronation there was a right Royal revel, and a sight worth seeing it must have been—the banquetting hall crowded with prelates, and nobles, and knights; the tables thronged with every luxury the culinary art of the age could accomplish; citizens of London serving in the Royal cellar, and those of Winchester in the Royal kitchen. When he went to the Crusades, Richard gave the most gorgeous dinners imaginable to King Philip of France at Messina, and to his future bride, Berengaria, and her mother, at Limasol, in Cyprus, and to Templars and Hospitallers at Jaffa. The minstrels and jongleurs of the time would have us believe that he had strange fancies about food. On one occasion, they say, when he entertained the Ambassadors of Saladin, he ordered a boar's head to be served up; and on another, when a craving for pork could not be satisfied, he dined upon the flesh of a young, plump Saracen. More wholesome, I should think, was the venison pasty which, according to Sir Walter Scott, he discussed with so much gusto in the cell of the clerk of Copmanhurst!

The good knights are dust, and their swords are rust; but they have left behind them some interesting records of their prowess at the feast, as well as in the field or the tourney. Among the many excellent consequences of the developement of chivalry may be included this: that it introduced into the mediæval methods of dining a certain air of courtly and gracious hospitality, and a dignified ceremonial which had hitherto been absolutely unknown. Indeed, there is something quite impressive about the order which appertained to a great mediæval banquet.

As soon as the lord entered his dining-hall, a horn sounded, and the guests whom their rank entitled to sit at his table hastened to take their places. As soon as all were seated, the servitors brought to each a basin filled with perfumed water, in which to dip his hands, and a napkin of fine linen with which to dry them. Then the master-cook's assistants entered, bearing in their arms huge dishes of smoking viands, and set to work at the side-table to cut up joints of roast beef, pork, wild boar, the inevitable venison pasties, pheasants, capons, and birds of the farm-yard generally; while others placed before the guests thick slices of bread to serve as plates. The meal at an end, the servitors handed round cups of hippocras—a compound of Lisbon and Canary wines, well

spiced—the tables were removed; the floor was swept; and minstrels and story-tellers presented themselves, to while away the long winter hours. In the bright summer days, feats of arms and knightly exercises were performed.

"He was fonde of life," says Peter Langtoft, speaking of King John, "and used lichoric." His extravagance and his sensuality were equally unbounded; and throughout all the storms and shadows of his reign he kept up a sumptuous table. One of his most memorable dinners was that which he gave at Winchester after his reconciliation with Archbishop Langton. Another was his banquet to the Barons when he had attached his seal and signature to the Great Charter of English Freedom. When, in the sere and yellow leaf of his unlovely life, he dined with the monks of Swineshead, one of them, according to a dubious story, put poison in his cup. He drank, and six days afterwards died:

Poisoned—ill fare; dead, forsook, cast off.

But it is much more probable that the cause of his death was a surfeit of peaches and new cider.

Perhaps the best dinner which Henry the Third ever enjoyed was on the occasion of his marriage to Eleanor of Provence. The nuptial feast was certainly one of extraordinary splendour, as you may read in the accurate pages of Miss Agnes Strickland, if you do not care for the old chroniclers. Henry, throughout his troubled reign, was much vexed by want of pence, which limited his expenditure on his cuisine. One year he was compelled to go to and fro seeking hospitality of "abbots, friars, clerks, and men of low degree, staying with them, and asking for gifts." At another time he was so hard up that "he seized by force on whatever was used in the way of meat and drink—especially wine—and even clothes, against the will of those who sold these things." A King reduced to such extremities could not pretend to any great nicety of taste relative to the quality of his provisions. His annual revenue seems never to have exceeded fifty thousand pounds—of our present money; a revenue on which he could not afford to be extravagant, especially as the price of wheat—and, consequently, of other articles—was subject, in his reign, to the most terrible fluctuations—varying from one shilling to a pound per quarter.

At this time the best dinners were to be found in the palaces of the bishops, and the refectories of mitred abbots. For example, there was Richard de Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford, whose Roll of Household Expenses, published by the Camden Society, shows the sumptuous manner of living of this prelate. His cellars were stored with the best wines; his kitchens were fragrant with appetising odours; the choicest products of the East filled his spiceries. His bakeries turned out for his use the best wheaten bread; his breweries, the strongest and most transparent ales. When he removed from one manor-house to another, or journeyed to London, he was accompanied by his domestic utensils, his brass pots, and his earthenware jugs; and his baker always preceded him, that the supply of bread might never run short. One day for dinner the bill of fare included three quarters of beef, three sheep, half a pig, eight geese, ten fowls, twelve pigeons, nine partridges, and uncounted larks, with a proportional supply of wine and beer. On fasting-days, the place of the meat, poultry, and game was taken by fish—eels, salmon, tench, lampreys, minnows, salt herrings and salt cod. In winter, oysters were bought by the gallon; in May and June, fresh mackerel tickled the episcopal palate; and trout, in their due season, grilled for his benefit. Spending one Christmas-tide at his Prestbury manor-house, he orders a cask of Bordeaux wine to be brought from Bristol, and an enormous quantity of beer to be brewed, and the Christmas Day dinner, for himself and his guests, comprehends two carcasses and three quarters of beef, with calves, does, pigs, fowls, bread and cheese, two "sectanis" of red wine and one of white. The total cost was four pounds, sixteen shillings and threepence farthing, or about forty pounds.

Edward the First, the greatest of the Plantagenets, was too much occupied with the working-out of a great policy, too much of a statesman and a general, to waste his time upon sensual indulgences; and during his reign the Royal dinner-table was somewhat meagrely provided. The most famous dinner recorded in his reign was that which he gave at Westminster, in the last year of his life, to his nobles, knights, and courtiers. Two swans were then placed on the board, and the King swore, before Heaven and the swans, that he would revenge the murder of Comyn upon Robert Bruce, and punish

the rebellious Scots. This vow of the swans was held to be specially sacred in the palmy days of chivalry.

That was a goodly dinner which Edward the Third gave to Sir John of Hainault, and other Lords of Hainault and Flanders, when they came across the seas to assist him in his war with Scotland. He was then lying at York, with the Queen, his mother, his nobles, and a great company of men-at-arms and archers. On Trinity Sunday, in the monastery of the Black Friars, where he lodged, no fewer than five hundred knights feasted at his table. On her part, the Queen brought sixty ladies and damosels to grace the banquet. "There might have been seen," says Froissart, "plenty of all manner of strange victuals"—strange, that is, to a foreigner—roast beef, and venison from the King's forest, and solid pasties fit only for strong stomachs, with good English ale and cider, and French wines. The ladies and damosels were freshly apparelled, ready for a dance when the tables were removed, and the floor had been newly strewn with sweet-smelling rushes. Unfortunately, after dinner, a sharp contention broke out between the English archers and the foreign grooms and pages. Volleys of clothyard shafts flew fast and far; and heavy blows were given on both sides, until the armed knights came down in their harness, and, striking into the affray, put the archers to flight.

When Edward visited Wark Castle, after the retreat of the Scots, he and his knights were received, in her husband's absence, by the Countess of Salisbury, whose beauty of person and charm of manner made immediate conquest of the King's fancy. He was stricken to the heart, says Froissart—in the English of Lord Berners—with a sparkle of fine love that endured long after; he thought no lady in the world so worthy to be beloved as she. Entering the Castle hand in hand, the Countess led him first into the hall, and afterwards into the chamber, nobly apparelled, Edward fixing his eyes upon her until she was abashed. Then he withdrew into a window recess to rest himself, and fell into a profound reverie; while the Countess went about to make cheer for the lords and knights who had accompanied him, and gave orders that the hall should be dressed for dinner. These duties fulfilled, she came blithely to the King, who was still absorbed in thought, and said: "Dear sir, why do you so study? It

is not fitting that you should do so ; rather should you make merry, seeing you have put to flight your enemies." After a while, Edward confessed that he was so taken by her sweet behaviour, her perfect wisdom, good grace, nobleness, and excellent beauty, that he could not but love her, and without her love would be but as dead. Like a chaste and noble gentlewoman, the Countess sharply chided him for using such language to the wife of a valiant knight and baron who had done him so much good service, and withdrew into the hall to hasten the dinner. Then she returned to the King, accompanied by some of his knights, and said : " Sir, if it please you to come into the hall, your knights wait for you to wash. You have fasted too long." So he went to the hall and washed, and sat down among his lords ; and the lady also. The King, however, ate but little. He sat still, musing, and, as often as he durst, cast his eyes upon the lady, who, no doubt, was well pleased when, next morning, he left the Castle, and, rejoining his army, marched northward to Berwick.

Having devised his scheme of the Round Table, or grand international tournament in honour of King Arthur, at Windsor, he ordered the erection of a house called the Round Table—now called the Round Tower—wherein to feast the knights who attended the joustings. The work was completed in about ten months, and in January, 1344, the King held the Round Table, at which was inaugurated the famous Order of the Garter. Not only the flower of the English chivalry, but knights from every corner of Christendom attended, and took part in the passages of arms, in the tilts and tourneys, the huntings and the dances, as well as in the noble dinners which the hospitality of Edward provided. Five years later there was again high festival at Windsor, when the King and twenty-five Companions of the Order, "all clothed in mantles of fine woollen cloth of blue colour, powdered with garters, and each wearing the great collar of the Order," went in solemn procession to the Chapel of Saint George, where the ceremonies of installation were performed. Afterwards, there was a glorious dinner, and many dishes were eaten, and much wine was drunken, and lords and ladies, knights and damosels trod not a few "measures" on the rush-strewn floor.

Splendid were the banquets of Richard the Second, who employed, we are told,

no fewer than two thousand cooks in his kitchen, and three hundred servitors ; but these figures are evidently fictitious. Fictitious, too, seems the number of guests—ten thousand—who were daily entertained at the King's expense, during the sunny years of his reign, when, "Youth at the prow and Pleasure at the helm," the bark of his fortunes sailed gaily over laughing waves, unconscious of the coming storm and of "the whirlpool" in which it was doomed to destruction. Richard's reign, from a culinary standpoint, is remarkable for having produced one of the earliest cookery books in our language : the celebrated "Forme of Cury," compiled by his master cook, who conceals his name under the initials C. S. S.

Some extracts from this ancient work may be interesting.

It opens with a kind of preamble, setting forth that it was compiled by the chief Master Cook of Richard the Second—who was accounted the best and royallest viander (feeder or epicure) of all the Christian Kings of his times—with the assent and avisement of the Masters of Physic and Philosophy who resided in his Court. And first, it teacheth a man how to make, craftily and wholesomely, common pottages and common meats for the household. Afterwards, it teacheth the making of curious pottages and subtleties—that is, devices in paste, wax, and confactions—for all manner of states, both high and low. And the teaching of the form of making pottages of meat, both of flesh and fish, are set here by number and by order.

A few of the recipes will show the quality of the book ; but there is this serious disadvantage, that no quantities are given nor any directions as to the length of time to be allowed for the different processes.

How to make Frumenty.—Nym [take] clene Wete and bray it in a mortar wel that the holys [hulls or husks] gou al of, and seyt [seethe] yt til it buste, and nyn yt up, and let yt kele [cool], and nym fayre fresch broth and swete mylk of Al-mandys or swete mylk of kyne and temper yt al. And nym the yokys of cyryn [eggs], boyle it a lityl, and set yt adon, and messe yt forthefryth fat venyson and fresh muton.

How to make Fritters.—Nym flowre and egryn and grynd [grind] peper and safron and mak thereto a batour [batter] and par(e) aplyn, and kyt(t) hem to brode

penys [pieces as broad as a penny], and kast hem theryn, and fry hem in the batour wyth fresch grus and serve it forth.

How to make Guse in Hotchpot.—Take Gus and smyte hem on pecys, cast hem in a pot with half wyne and half water, and put thereto a gode qntite of Oynons and erbest. Set it over the fyre and cover it fast; make a luyo [mixture] of brede and blode and lay it therewith. Put thereto powder fort* and serve it.

Capons in Concys.†—Take Capons and rost hem right hoot that they be not half ynouhz [enough], and heeve hem to gobetts [large pieces], and cast them in a pot. Put thereto clere broth; seeth hem that they be tendre; take brede and the selp broth, and drawe it up yfore [together]; take strong powder, and saffron, and salt, and cast thereto. Take ayron [eggs] and seethe him harde; take out the yolk, and heeve the whyte thereinne. Take the pot from the fyre, and cast the whyte thereinne. Measse the disshe therewith, and lay the yolkes hool, and flour it with cloves.

Lampreys in Galantine.—Take Lamprons and scalde hem; seethe hem; meng [mix] powder of galyngale and some of the broth togyther. Boile it; put thereto powder of gynger and salt; take the Lamprons and boile hem; lay hem in a dyssh. Lay the seeve [broth] above; serve quickly.

In the following recipe the spelling is modernised.

A Fish Pie (Custard of Fyssh).—Take loaches, lampreys, and eels; smite them in pieces, and stew them with almond milk and onions; fry the loaches in oil, and lay the fish therein. Cast thereon powder fort and powder douce—made of aromatic spices—with raisins, currants and prunes damsons; take galantine, and the broth therein; swing [shake or mix] it together, and cast in the dish. Bake, and serve it forth.

The profuseness with which our great nobles and ecclesiastics ordered their feasts at this period, may be inferred from the bill of fare provided by George Neville, brother of the King-maker, on his installation as Archbishop of York. This document has often been printed; but I must quote it here, because it is really a notable specimen of a large way of doing things. It reads as if the Archbishop had been provisioning a numerous garrison against a six months' siege:

* A mixture of the warmer spices—pepper, ginger, etc.—pulverised.

† Supposed to be some well-known sauce.

Wheat, three hundred quarters; ale, three hundred tuns; wine, one hundred and four tuns; hippocras, one pipe; oxen, eighty; wild bulls, six; sheep, one thousand and four; calves, three hundred; porkers, three hundred; geese, three thousand; capons, two thousand three hundred; pigs (young ones), two thousand; peacocks, one hundred; cranes, two hundred; kids, two hundred; chickens, two thousand; pigeons, four thousand; conies, four thousand; bitterns, two hundred and four; mallards and teal, four thousand; heronshaws, four thousand; pheasants, two hundred; partridges, five hundred; woodcocks, four hundred; plovers, four hundred; curlews, one hundred; quails, one hundred; egrets, one thousand; reeves, two hundred; harts (bucks and roes), four hundred odd; venison pasties, cold, four thousand; ditto, hot, one thousand five hundred and six; dishes of jelly, with paste, one thousand; dishes of jelly, plain, four thousand; custards, cold, four thousand; custards, hot, two thousand; pike, three hundred; bream, three hundred; seals, eight; and porpoises, four. Sixty-two cooks were engaged to dress these various articles.

The number of persons entertained was about three thousand five hundred; but the entertainment must have spread over several days, or the consumption of such a mass of edibles would have been impossible. One thing is abundantly clear—that the commissariat in a great nobleman's household must have been admirably organised to permit of the collection of all these various items, more particularly in an age when there were very few facilities of locomotion and conveyance.

A curious account of a wedding-dinner, about the same epoch, will be found in the alliterative poem of "The Tournament of Tottenham" (in the Harleian MSS., but printed by Bishop Percy and others). It

Served was in rich array,
And so they sate in jollity all the long day.

THE ART TREASURES OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

FIRST PART.

I pray you, let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials, and the things of fame
That do renown this city.

Twelfth Night.

It might be reasonably supposed that a Corporation boasting such antiquity and possessing such enormous wealth as that

of the great City of London, whose possessions have from time to time been increased by noble bequests and gifts, would have, like so many Continental towns of the same antiquity, galleries filled with fine pictures and statuary, with magnificent tapestries and fabrics, with gorgeous specimens of handicraft, with rare carvings and inlays, with the best products of the potter's wheel, and other objects of artistic interest, the gifts and work of its citizens in bygone days, and the landmarks of their progress in taste and culture. It might also be thought that its great trade Guilds, originally, if not now, connected with the trades which give them name, would sedulously have collected together specimens of their handiwork, if only for exhibition to and for the instruction of the members of their craft.

But enquiry proves that there is very little worthy of the name of art belonging to the Corporation, and that the City Companies, though possessing many beautiful things, have, with a few exceptions, done very little in past times to interest the public in the crafts they represent.

Many great and rich men have been numbered amongst the citizens—men who have delighted to spend their wealth in great charities, and in enriching the dignity of the great Corporation to which it was their privilege to belong—but their munificence was seldom connected with Art in any shape or form. It does not seem to have occurred to them that any expenditure for the encouragement of the Fine Arts was advisable, save in later times, when a Company might wish to possess the portrait of the reigning sovereign, in which case they indulged in a picture of the "penny plain and tuppence coloured" class, "ye coste of ye same not to exceed ye somme of three pounds sterling, includinge ye frame."

And yet in the Middle and succeeding ages England was not without painters or skilled artificers, of whose existence there is ample evidence in the few treasures to be found in the City; and, moreover, the ranks of these artists were from time to time recruited by the immigration of foreigners, many of whom, as Holbein, Rubens, Vandyck, and Torregiano, were of the front rank. It would seem, however, that the City Fathers were indifferent to the possession of any of the masterpieces which were executed in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for, whilst these are to be found in many a

stately mansion throughout the country, there is scarcely an ancient picture of any great merit to be found within the length and breadth of the City. In fact, such pictures might be counted on the fingers. The finest of them—the magnificent Holbein possessed by the Barbers' Company, of surpassing interest and value—is generally open to visitors who apply for admission; but owing to the circumscribed space in which it is hung, it can never be properly seen. The same Company also possesses a fine portrait of Inigo Jones, by Vandyck. Countless treasures in the way of plate are to be found—in spite of the fact that so much was melted down in obedience to Royal commands during the Civil War, and at other times—but these are the private property of the Companies, presented to them for their use. They might, however, occasionally be exposed for exhibition.

There is a story told of a French savant who was shown a priceless jewel by a great Duke.

"Thank you, my lord Duke," said the man of science, "for allowing me to share with you the possession of so great a treasure."

"In what way?" said the Duke.

"Why, your Grace can do no more than look at it, and you have allowed me to do the same."

The story might be borne in mind more often than it is in the City and amongst the City Companies, where certain objects of interest are kept locked up from year to year, and, indeed, for all the pleasure that they give to anybody, might just as well not exist. It is not for an instant suggested that these treasures should pass out of the possession of their owners, but it might be thought that all the combined wealth of the City Companies could find some place for the occasional display of such articles as are not in general use with them, and that this gallery might be under the supervision of the Corporation.

The occasional efforts made by the Drapers' and Turners' Companies to get together exhibitions of modern works show that such things are possible; and some twenty years ago a very fine exhibition of plate and armour was organised by the Ironmongers' Company, of which a well-illustrated catalogue has since been published. Amongst the smaller Companies, that of the Clockmakers is perhaps the only one which has made any effort. A fairly complete collection of clocks has

under their auspices been added to the Guildhall Museum.

It is intended, however, to refer to the Art Treasures of the Companies in a subsequent article, this present one being devoted to the possessions of the Corporation.

The great success of the loan exhibition of pictures held in the summer of 1890 in the Art Gallery of the Corporation seems to prompt this enquiry into the art collections to be found in the City, and the means taken to secure the proper exhibition of such collections.

The crowded state of the rather inconvenient galleries during the exhibition just referred to is good evidence that, provided an exhibition contain works of sufficient merit to attract popular attention, there is always to be found in the City a large contingent of the business population who delight to spend their spare moments in examining works of art. This exhibition did contain many well-known pictures, notably Reynolds's superb portraits of the three Ladies Waldegrave; some fine French and Dutch pictures; several of Sir John Millais's best landscapes; Sir Frederick Leighton's beautiful "Summer Moon"; and a splendid collection of paintings by those English artists who are known as the Pre-Raphaelite school. The crowd which daily flocked to see these works was composed of all sorts and conditions of men—warehousemen, clerks, office-boys, merchants, and professional men for the most part—but, at the same time, there was a large sprinkling of people who had evidently gone into the City for the special purpose of seeing the exhibition. During the luncheon hours the galleries were so thronged that it was very difficult to see the pictures at all. This satisfactory state of affairs was surely sufficient encouragement for the enlargement of the idea: if not for the formation of a finer permanent collection, at any rate, for the greater frequency of such loan exhibitions. The provision of some such recreation or instruction is a debt which the Corporation, in its position as trustee of such enormous wealth and position, owes to the public. It is quick enough to recognise its indebtedness in other ways; might not the Arts also claim a humble share of those attentions which are lavished on Burnham Beeches, and such far-away spots? There are many people in the City proper to whom a free picture gallery of good quality would be a boon; and these are not only of the wealthier classes.

To the majority of workers in the City life is almost a barren wilderness without enlightenment—a walk along a narrow street hedged in on either side by high walls without openings. Very occasionally a trip may be taken to the classic shades of Epping or Burnham; but a picture gallery would be always with them, and, as has been frequently shown in the East End, a well-filled picture-gallery or museum is an oasis in the desert of the daily life of such people. It is possible that they may not thoroughly understand pictures; indeed, that they should do so is impossible, and the same might be said of the best of us; but yet it must not be said that they do not enjoy them. Thorough understanding can only come with special knowledge and training; but it is quite possible that those who have not this special knowledge, may, and do, appreciate an art in its broader sense, although this want of knowledge will not allow them to follow and appreciate its refinements and intricacies. All persons are, more or less, fond of listening to music, and are capable of deriving great pleasure therefrom, and yet many have no technical knowledge of music; nor could they analyse their enjoyment, save that they feel enlightened and charmed. Can it be said that they do not appreciate music? According as their taste is cultivated so will they appreciate, and this appreciation is limited by their want of technical knowledge; they will miss the refinements, but they will appreciate the broad lights and shades. So according to their lights, the uncultivated and uneducated may reap a large amount of enjoyment and interest from a picture gallery. But where in the City is the opportunity to be found? The museums and picture galleries of London are not to be found within the precincts of the City; nor is it for a moment suggested that the collections in the National Gallery or the British Museum should be moved; but it is difficult to understand the policy of an officialism which decrees that that most useful of all galleries, the South Kensington Museum, should find a local habitation in a neighbourhood devoted exclusively to fashion, and far away from the bustling centres of business and labour.

It is not the votaries of fashion who patronise, nor is their jaded taste likely to appreciate, the National Art Treasures. It is to the busy worker, whose moments of recreation are few, that such collections mostly appeal. Should society take it into

its head that Art and the pursuit of culture is to be fashionable, and a thing to be done, then society has only to deposit itself in its carriage and it is whirled away in a few moments to the particular spot where, for the time being, Art is to be found; aye, even to the uttermost parts of the East End, should fashion so decree, and provided that society will meet the rest of itself there. But with the busy worker these conditions do not hold, and that the public galleries may be of any use to him, it is necessary that they shall be handy to his place of business, and certainly not situated at the other end of the town, as in the case of South Kensington. He wants a place where he can spend twenty minutes or half an hour, where he is free to come and go as he likes. Such a twenty minutes might be of inestimable benefit to a man who has his eyes open. Again it may be asked: what opportunities are there in the City for such a man? What have the guardians of this wealthy Corporation done for the enlightenment of its citizens, for the instruction and pleasure of the thousands of workers who each day toil within its precincts, and help to add to the sum of its greatness?

In other English towns—Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Nottingham—the museums and picture galleries of the Corporations grow apace, and are housed in fairly central positions, within reach of the working crowd. In London, perhaps, the same circumstances do not apply, for here are to be found the great national collections, and these must necessarily be centrally placed; but within the City proper there is little in the shape of Art to attract the public. There are, it is true, the Corporation Picture Gallery, and the Guildhall Museum and Library, all free of admission. Of these, the Library is a most successful institution, nearly always well occupied; the Museum, considered as the property of so great a Corporation, is inferior. But what shall be said of the collection of pictures? This is housed in two fairly spacious galleries situated on the east side of Guildhall Yard, and is perhaps one of the poorest collections ever brought together in a public gallery. Had it not been for Alderman Boydell, the originator of the Shakespeare Gallery scheme in 1789, the collection could hardly have come into existence, for the Corporation itself is responsible for a very small portion of the exhibition. It is made up to a large extent of gifts by

Alderman Boydell and others, amongst whom the artists themselves are frequently found—the latter a proceeding not likely to add to the value of the collection.

Only some four or five of the pictures have been acquired by purchase; amongst these are "The Death of Wat Tyler," by Northcote, and "The Death of David Rizzio," by Opie, both of heroic size, and painted at a period when English art was at a low ebb. There are several pictures of the same period in this collection, presented by Alderman Boydell, but amongst the whole of them it would be difficult to pick out one of any interest or value artistically. Let any one who wishes to understand what the art of this period was like, turn over the illustrations of the Boydell Shakespeare, which, with one or two exceptions, are very bad, and yet were painted by the leading artists of that day. Then there is the inevitable portrait of the Queen, by Hayter, an artist already forgotten, although he was the fashionable portrait-painter of fifty years ago. There are also various portraits by Sir William Beechey, one of which is fine, while the rest may be called respectable; a fine portrait of Richard Clark, by Sir Thomas Lawrence; and a portrait of Sir Charles Pratt, afterwards Lord Camden, ascribed to Reynolds. This latter is a rather suspicious picture; a square of canvas on which the head and shoulders are painted, appears to have been cut out, and judging by the quality of the work in the head, a copy has been substituted, or else Reynolds must have been nodding when he painted it. An examination of the back of the canvas might settle the question. A gigantic canvas of Copley's, "The Siege of Gibraltar," which occupies one end of the room, and a still more uninteresting painting, by a Frenchman named Alaux, of a deputation of the Corporation waiting upon Louis Philippe at Windsor, complete the list of pictures in the first gallery.

There are some few pieces of sculpture, mostly busts; the most interesting is Mr. Onslow Ford's statue of Mr. Henry Irving as Hamlet: a fine characteristic and well-modelled piece of sculpture, and, moreover, an excellent likeness. It is presented by the artist, and has only recently been placed in the gallery. In this case, at least, the gallery is the gainer by an artist's generosity, and the time-honoured remark as to the advisability of looking a gift-horse in the mouth does not apply.

The second and smaller gallery is of more interest than the first; the pictures are as a rule smaller, and do not give the same idea of unrealised ambition. There are some small Dutch pictures of no great merit; two views of London by Samuel Scott, which are interesting, as well from a topographical point of view as from the fact that Scott was a very good landscape-painter, who died before the foundation of the Royal Academy, in 1768; two fine interiors by David Roberts; a good portrait by Reynolds; and on one wall five modern paintings, the gift of various Companies—of these, "Flirtation," by Seymour Lucas, and "The Stream in Summer-time," by B. W. Leader, are very good specimens. The whole gallery is, however, dominated by an exceedingly vulgar and gaudy painting of large size by a foreign artist, whose name it is not worth while to record, which was exhibited at the Italian Exhibition, and then deposited here by the artist, possibly with the hope of selling it. But why did the Corporation allow such a hideous monstrosity to be exhibited under their sanction? Certainly, it were far better that the public should go without, or be treated to the gloomy oppressiveness of Northcote and Opie, than be forced to look at such ruthless vulgarity, both as to subject and execution, as is to be found in this picture. Such generosity on the part of artists is not to be encouraged, even though it may enable the otherwise bare walls of the gallery to be covered. There is a smaller room out of this gallery, in which are hung various engravings, amongst them an old one of the Barbers' Holbein. Connecting these two rooms is a short passage, the walls of which are hung with some fairly executed pencil-drawings illustrating the destruction of old London Bridge and the building of the new one, which have a certain interest as topographical records, but as works of art the quality is not good enough for public exhibition.

And this is the collection of pictures of the richest Corporation in the world—a collection which contains hardly an interesting, much less a fine picture!

Nor is the collection to be found in the Museum of much greater value. One fine Roman pavement, a few old specimens of pottery, a few manuscripts, and some old shoes, and the tale is told. Most of the things to be found there are of purely antiquarian interest, and do not appeal to the general public. A few good specimens,

showing the progress of modern manufactures, would be worth all the old broken bottles in the world.

The memory is carried back almost with shame to the magnificent galleries and museums of the Continental municipalities: of the Hague; of Antwerp; of Brussels; the Bargello at Florence; and the Christian Museum at Brescia. And even the efforts of our own provincial Corporations should bring a blush to the cheek of their London brethren.

True it is, that of late years, in the cause of art education, a palatial City and Guilds' Technical Institute has been built and endowed; but why—the agonised cry once more arises—was South Kensington selected as the site? Was it because the Exhibition Commissioners had some land to sell? An increase of the funds and buildings of the London Technical Institute would have answered better. The question of technical education lies, however, outside the scope of this article, the object of which is to call attention to the apparent want of effort on the part of the Corporation to procure even a fairly good art collection. Indifference on the part of officialism to Art in any shape or form has always been an English characteristic, and when any question relative to the purchase of works of art or the laying out of streets for architectural effect arises, the solution is arrived at from a purely mercantile point of view.

It is a matter of great regret that the Corporation cannot see its way to spending occasionally a little money on pictures, and making some effort to improve the quality of its collection. It is not suggested that large sums should be spent in acquiring the priceless works of the old masters; such works, unless a special opportunity occurs, are rightly to be purchased for the nation, and placed in the National Gallery. But as in Manchester and Liverpool, a few modern pictures might from time to time be added to the collection; they would, if carefully selected, add greatly to the interest of the galleries, and might turn the present gloomy exhibition into an attractive one. The cost, too, would not be much—certainly a mere drop in the ocean in comparison to the large sums spent by the Corporation in other matters.

Another direction in which the collection might be developed, and one which would be singularly appropriate, is in the acquisition of pictures of topographical interest, such as views of Old and New London,

and pictures of London life. There are two such views in the gallery by Samuel Scott, which have been already referred to. This artist painted many such views, and his works, amongst others, should be sought after.

Such an exhibition would have great historical interest, apart from any artistic value that it might possess, and would, moreover, very appropriately be in the keeping of a Corporation which is justly proud of its history and antiquity.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the magnificent loan exhibition of last summer is only the forerunner of many others; its great success alone would justify its repetition, and the great willingness with which the possessors of fine pictures come forward with their treasures removes many a stumbling-block, which would otherwise hinder those responsible for the exhibition.

ELECTRIC RAILWAYS.

It is often said that London, while having a most excellent and cheap service of omnibuses, has about the very worst cabs of any great city, and is also very badly off for train service—not as regards the country, but between the various suburbs, and across the Metropolitan Districts. Perhaps the cry as to cabs is rather exaggerated, for the hansoms of to-day are by no means bad vehicles, being, in the majority of cases, at all events very decently horsed, while the four-wheelers are distinctly improving; but in the case of train accommodation the outcry is justified. What have we north of the Thames? We have the Metropolitan and District Railways—very worthy in their way, no doubt, despite the grumble as to overcrowding, which can hardly be avoided at certain times of the day—and the North London Railway. But these railways are not enough, and do not go straight enough to their destination. Take the case of a man who wants to go from King's Cross, or Paddington, to Charing Cross; he had better take a cab unless he wants to go a most wearisome way round; and the same thing may be said of the journey from Charing Cross to Farringdon Street—here he would have to make the round of the City before he reached his destination. No; the Underground Railway may be very good, but it is not enough. There is another objection to this line, and that is

the smoke. It is common enough to hear the Underground Railway held up to execration as an important item in the fog manufacture of London. How much truth there may be in the charge I don't know; but it is quite certain that the more smoke hanging about, the more fog there is likely to be, and conversely the most simple logic will show that if you diminish the smoke you will diminish the fog.

Well, what say our readers to a railway without smoke, a railway comparatively inexpensive to construct, and a railway cheap to work? It sounds impossible; but if you will come a short journey with me to-day, I will show you a railway which answers that description, and I think you will find that the City and South London Railway goes a long way towards solving the problem of internal communication in London.

The motive power of the City and South London Railway is electricity, which is, as a driving power, most certainly in this country entirely in its infancy; and although the line has been open but a short time, it most certainly has been proved that it is a success. The line runs from King William Street, in the City, to Stockwell, with four intervening stations, and the actual rails are contained in two tubes, one for down trains, and one for up trains, which connect at the termini. These tubes are of iron rings, and the mode of building them was as follows: Of course the beginning, the sinking of the shafts, and so on, was a matter of every-day work, but the building of the tubes was a very different matter. The principal factor was a big circular steel shield, as they called it—as a matter of fact it was a tube of about eleven feet diameter. Towards the end which was to be driven into the earth were fixed, all round the interior, strong hydraulic presses, and then, the earth in front being somewhat loosened by men, the actual process began. Inside the end of the shield furthest away from the earth were built up these rings of iron. Each ring consisted of six segments and a key piece, and each ring advanced the length of the tube eighteen inches, and was firmly bolted to the one preceding it. As these successive rings were built up, the actual tube began to come in touch with the hydraulic presses, whereupon the power was turned on, and then, as the iron tube could not go back, the shield had to advance into the earth, which was cleared from the interior of the

shield, and the work of building was resumed. But then came a difficulty. As the shield advanced and left the tube behind, there was a space of an inch—the thickness of the shield—remaining all round the tube. This could not be left as it was, or a settling of the ground above would take place, and claims for compensation would rush in from householders, water companies, gas companies, and—well, there was no saying where it might end—so this space had to be filled up, and this operation was done by liquid cement. This was accomplished by leaving originally two holes in each segment of the rings, and then forcing, by compressed air machines, the cement into these holes, beginning at the lowest, and working away at that till the cement appeared at the next above, and then plugging up the first and transferring the machine to the second, and so on, till the tube was encased in a solid cover of cement. At all the stations subsequently the company had to take down considerable lengths of the tubes, in order to build larger tunnels for the platforms; and when this was done it was found that the cement had, in some cases, penetrated far beyond the original inch, either into an air-hole or into some hollow where the shield had not cut clean, and the cement taken out—I saw a specimen—was as hard and firm as any stone.

On the whole, the material cut through did not present many great difficulties; but in one place gravel and sand did cause an obstruction, which was got over in an ingenious manner. Of course, in an ordinary tunnel the method followed when water is met with is to set machines at work to pump it out as quickly as it comes in; but here the question of compensation would again come in, and some other method which would not disturb the surface had to be resorted to. The method adopted was to proceed under compressed air. By forcing the air against the sand and gravel the water was kept back, but the air escaped through the water and sand and gravel at a great rate. This was avoided by the means of the cement, which was driven into the soil where the leak was, and then work could go on again. The average distance covered each day was thirteen feet six inches at each working-face.

Now, having seen how the tunnels were made, let us go to King William Street, and proceed to Stockwell, for there are all

the works connected with the line. We pay our twopence—the fare is twopence for any distance—and, receiving no ticket, pass through a turnstile, and walk, not on to a platform, but into a lift, and so down seventy feet into the depths of the earth. There are two lifts at each station, the average depth being fifty feet, and one tube being over the other at the intermediate stations, the same lifts can serve both platforms. They have a curious sort of door, these lifts—doors composed of iron, which do not open or shut in the usual way, nor yet run on rollers, but which literally shut up as trellis-work. People are admitted on one side, and leave the lift on the opposite side, thus avoid all crushing.

Well, here we are on the platform, and here is the train waiting for us. It consists of an engine and three cars. The cars are round on the roof, and fit pretty closely to the tube, while the engine we will see better presently.

"Any more going on? Right, forward!" and away we go, and experience rather a shock to our feelings. Electricity! Yes, anything connected with electricity must be smooth, we think, which is extremely foolish of us, for as the cars run on ordinary wheels on ordinary rails, we should only be justified in expecting the ordinary amount of shaking, and that is what we get.

The railway seems to consist of most steep gradients, and extraordinary curves. We start down a descent with a gradient of one in fourteen, and round a curve of one hundred and forty feet radius, and when we have passed under the Thames we go up an ascent with a gradient of one in thirty, which is pretty good climbing, and has an immediate effect on the electric lighting arrangements, for the light comes from the same supply as the motive power, and consequently when more motive power is necessary less light is obtainable. This is noticeable at the start after each stoppage at the various stations, which are at High Street, Borough; at the Elephant and Castle; New Street, Kennington Park; the Oval; and the terminus at Stockwell, which we reach in about fourteen minutes. Coming into Stockwell Station, we go round as sharp a curve as it is possible to imagine a train—even a short one like this—on. As the doors of the carriages are open—the doors are at the ends—it is almost impossible to see from one carriage into another, for the next to you seems to have disappeared into

a corner, and does not come into view again till we are safely in the station.

Now we will follow the rest of the passengers to the lift, and up to the open air, and then proceed to visit the works where all the motive power used on the line—for driving the engines or moving the lifts—from Stockwell to King William Street is produced. As we go we give a look at the station, and do not feel very greatly moved at the architectural beauty displayed. The stations, except that in King William Street, are all alike, and each consists of a small, square building, with a dome very many sizes too large for it; but the domes have their use, for in the space afforded by them are placed all the chains, and ropes, and various machinery for working the lifts. These lifts, chains, ropes, and machinery, the people connected with them say will bear a weight of two hundred tons; four tons being about the heaviest they are likely to be called on to carry.

Now we pass into the front garden of a good-sized house in the Clapham Road which is used for general purposes, and, going round the house, find ourselves at the fountain head of the Electric Railway. In the middle of the space are two tall chimneys, which, strange to say, although the fires are kept up with the commonest coal, give forth no smoke. If only all chimneys would do the same! But what we want most to see is the interior of this building on our left. Let us enter, and we find that the first half contains engines under repair, and so we have a good chance of examining an engine. The engines themselves carry no power at all, but pick it up, so to speak, as they go. The electric power is carried all along the line by a steel conductor, which forms, as it were, a third rail; the engines have what is technically termed a shoe, but what is, in reality, a metal plate, which touches this third rail and forms the connection. Come up on this engine and see what a simple affair it is—there is absolutely no complicated machinery whatever. One lever for going forward, or for reversing; one lever for regulating the power; and two brake-handles—one an ordinary hand-brake, and the other a Westinghouse brake. The engine requires no fire, no stoking, no water—in fact, nothing at all, except a supply of compressed air for the Westinghouse brake. This air is taken in at the Stockwell terminus. It can hardly take a man long to learn to control one of

these engines—in fact, the only difficulty would be the fear of bringing the short train to a too sudden standstill by means of the powerful brake.

Passing on through this division we come to the actual engine-room; and as electricity and watches do not go well together, we had better leave them at the entrance. Here is the actual motive power made by those three huge machines; from this room is the whole length of the line controlled. Two machines are always at work, while the third is always ready to begin, should anything go wrong with the others. The line for inspection is divided in four circuits, and in this corner of the room are indicators, by means of which, at a glance, you can see what power is being used on what part of the line; while another indicator shows the leakage all over the line—which averages somewhat a little less than one horsepower. As we walk down the room we become overcome with the sense of the mighty power of these machines, with their continuous action and wonderful result in the production of such a mighty power as electricity. When we have passed these three mighty engines, we come to what may be called the low-comedy engines, which seem to start and leave off as their fancy chooses. First one has a turn, and then number two takes a start, and even number three occasionally is not left out in the cold. These are the hydraulic machines, which work all the lifts on the system. They work automatically, forcing the pressure water into the pipes as room is made by a lift working and releasing any amount of water into the waste pipes; and if one engine is not strong enough—as will happen if two lifts are working at the same time—another helps it. It is not quite right, however, to talk about waste pipes, for there is no waste here—all water when it has done its work is returned by a second pipe to the tanks at Stockwell, and is ready to be used again.

There is only one more shed up here, and that is the shed where the rolling stock out of use is kept, where trains are made up, and so on. There is nothing much to see here, so we will make our way back to the station—not by the way we came, but by the tunnel through which the rolling stock is brought up to the works. The railway practise what they preach, for they take their tunnel here

under their own house. The line goes down this tunnel till it reaches the proper level at an incline of one in three and a half. It is hardly necessary to say that the engines do not run up here, but that engines and carriages are hauled up here by wire rope and steam power.

It does not take us long to reach the level of the line, though there is an empty train in the way, which, as the conductor does not reach up here, is in darkness, and through which we have to grope our way; but when we do come down to the working part of the line, we had better look where we are going, and not step on the conductor, or the consequences might be more surprising than pleasant.

So, taking care we follow our guide towards the platform, only stopping to have a look at a small collection of insignificant looking pipes, one of which has a brass ring on the end. And then we are told that these insignificant pipes are a powerful draining machine—of course moisture must collect in a tunnel—worked by hydraulic power, and capable of lifting one hundred and fifty gallons of water a minute to the height of two hundred feet. So, surviving the perils of the conductor, we arrive at the platform, and as one of us forgot his watch in the machine room, we have to wait, and can watch the people as they come and go. It is curious enough to see a man critically examine the engine as much as to say, "I know the power's concealed there somewhere," while very many seem to have a lurking suspicion of the reservoirs 'round the sides, which contain the air for the Westinghouse brake. But it is much more curious to see them jump as the engine moves out, and as it goes emits a little flash of lightning, which has a most weird effect.

Here comes the watch, however, and as a train is just starting we may as well go in it, and be taken back to King William Street and the matter-of-fact City, after a short visit which seems to us a visit, indeed, to the realms of wonder and mystery.

Such is the Electric Railway as evolved by the City and South London Railway Company. The Company have already applied for powers to extend their line to Islington, or rather to make another line connected with King William Street Station with a subway; and in America—we were in front of the Americans this time—a company is being formed to connect Jersey City with New

York, under the Hudson, in the same way. The present railway seems to be an excellent beginning; it remains to be seen if the system can be extended.

THE TREVERTON MARRIAGE.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE was not the smallest loophole of an excuse for Sir Everard to get through, and to get out of keeping his promise to take his wife to Coalquay that Saturday. She showed no symptom of cold; the day was warm and sunny—a Saint Luke's summer day. Beatrix had every minute mapped out for them both. Her mapping did not seem to include many minutes to be spent in her husband's society; but that could not be helped.

"You cannot sit by while I am interviewing cooks, dear," she explained, "and you must not be tortured by watching my agonies under the dentist's hands. We will shop in the morning; then lunch; then the County Club for you; and cooks and dentists for me. You have Mr. Gregson to see, too. I shall try to be at the station for the 5.40."

"My dear, what can you do with your time till 5.40? I particularly wanted you to come with me to the Gregsons'. They will be quite hurt if we don't have tea there. I will pick you up at four."

"Quite impossible, Everard. You seem to think a cook can be caught in a day. I shall have to spend my whole afternoon running between Mrs. Day's register office and Mr. Stone's dental surgery."

"You may find a cook at once."

"No such luck. Mrs. Blake told me there were none to be had. She spent last Saturday from ten till six at Mrs. Day's, and saw nothing worth twopence."

"Then why waste time by going at all?"

"You would see some reason in it if you were to be shortly left dinnerless."

"Your appointment with Stone is for three, I believe. I will pick you up there at four."

"At four I shall be at Mrs. Day's."

"I will pick you up there, then."

"Cookless, I shall be immovable!"

Argument and persuasion were alike useless. Sir Everard resigned himself. They went to the dressmaker; they bought new songs, also new fans, and

silks, and photograph frames, and punks, and big spiders, and china pigs, and gallons of enamel, and ribbons and rushes, and grasses, and yards and yards of art muslin—all of which ate up a great part of the day; they lunched, and then they parted, Beatrix on the cook and dentist quest, Sir Everard for the County Club.

It was a quarter to three. Beatrix, knowing that time and tide and dentists wait for no man, could only look in at Mrs. Day's to say she would come back. As luck would have it, the long-sought treasure was there waiting for her. The deed was done at once; the cook was engaged; and Beatrix went to the dentist with an easy mind.

That great man looked at Lady Treverton's tooth; told her it was not ready for stopping; that she must return that day three weeks; and charged her two guineas for the news.

It was only a quarter-past three. She would do some more shopping, and return to Mrs. Day's to be picked up there by Sir Everard at four.

She walked down Whyte Street, the principal street of Coaliquay. She was considering deeply whether she should not change one of the songs she had bought in the morning, when she became aware that somebody had recognised her with a little ecstatic exclamation. She looked in the direction of the exclamation, and saw coming down the steps of an hotel a pretty, faded woman, gorgeously dressed in a red plush cloak, a small scarlet bonnet nestling in a foam of fair, fluffy hair, very dirty, pale, Suède gloves, a multitude of bracelets and bangles, and imitation diamonds in her ears.

"You do not remember me," said this odd apparition, in pretty French, and a tone expressive of pathetic reproach.

"Of course I remember you, Princess," said Beatrix, delightedly. "I am charmed to see you. Are you staying here? May I come in and hear all about you?"

"Please come in," said the Princess; "it will be so kind. It is rather far upstairs, if you don't mind."

It was up, and up, and up. Beatrix reached the last landing panting, feeling as if she had left her breath half-way down all those stairs. The Princess ushered her into a small, untidy room, where, amongst a chaos of shabby bedroom furniture, the remains of a lunch, heaped up dresses, and open trunks, a

chair was found, and relieved of its burden of music-books. Lady Treverton sat on the chair, and the Princess sat on the bed.

"I am afraid it is not very comfortable," Her Highness apologised. "I should not have brought you in if I had had time to consider, and had not acted on impulse. I only thought how pleased I was to see you."

Beatrix might have echoed the words. She felt very much embarrassed, though the Princess did not. She, too, had followed an impulse, only thinking how pleased she was to see her friend. Now she became guiltily aware of excuses to be made for the lack of all practical friendliness on her part. It had been hard enough to explain by letter how Sir Everard did not care for music sufficiently to take the long journey from Oswaldburn, even for one evening; it would be much more awkward to account for such apathy now they were face to face in Coaliquay, within a few yards of the Grand Theatre.

The Princess, being the innocent party, was free to follow her natural instincts, and could not have been more perfectly at ease, and could not have betrayed less consciousness of commercial disappointment, had she been receiving Lady Treverton in the Palazzo Castelluca at Rome. Beatrix, feeling ashamed and sorry beyond all hiding, blundered at once upon the awkward subject.

"I was so very much disappointed that we could not come to the opera," she said, earnestly. "The weather has been so bad, and Sir Everard is not very strong. I hope you have had a very good time of it?"

"Not quite so good as we hoped," the Princess answered, evasively, flushing slightly.

Beatrix instantly and naturally attributed the evasion and the blush to remembrance of her falsified promises, and she said, hastily:

"I am so sorry. We are only here accidentally to-day; Sir Everard and I both had business. It would have been delightful to stay for the opera to-night. I suppose you play to-night? But it is too late; there would not be a chance of a seat."

"Do persuade him to stay," coaxed the Princess, her face lighting. "I am sure there are plenty of seats."

"Thanks, so much; but though I don't mind myself, he would not like a back seat. He always complains he cannot see

and hear over people's heads, and a seat at the side gives him a pain in his neck."

"But there are middle seats in the front row."

Then the Princess coloured again, and Beatrix read the blush aright this time—there were hardly any seats taken for that evening.

"Then I will take two," she said, quickly, feeling for her purse, "and try to persuade him to stay. Oh! I am so sorry, I have not enough money. I did not bring much, as my husband was with me, and I paid my last guineas to the dentist."

The poor Princess's face fell quite beyond control this time. Beatrix could not bear to see it. She forgot how Sir Everard had refused even pecuniary countenance to the Opera Company, and she said, beseechingly:

"Please trust me. Let me have two stalls, and I will send you a cheque on Monday. I forgot—we have no evening garments."

"Thank you, dear Lady Treverton. Dress will not matter. In fact, I am afraid you may find rather an empty house. Saturday night is not fashionable in Coaliquay, it seems."

Here a knock at the door interrupted them. It was followed at once by a very pretty girl, who darted in, and then stopped short, seeing such a well-dressed, stately lady in the room.

"Lady Treverton wants two stalls for to-night, Madge," said the Princess, in her broken English. "Please tell Mr. Bolter to find them and keep them."

"I don't think he'll have much difficulty in finding them, or keeping them, either," retorted Madge, angry at being turned out of the room by the Princess, who thought herself such a great lady, though she only sang second to Mademoiselle Marguerite Duval. That Princess, with her airs, required keeping in her place. She was only fit to be in the chorus; and Bolter spoilt all the operas by putting her forward. As if people cared to hear a Princess sing, if she hadn't a voice worth ten shillings a week!

"Well, make hasty, dear, and ask him what can be done," said the Princess, in her kind but majestic way.

"I wasn't aware that I was your servant," returned Mademoiselle Marguerite Duval, with a strong Irish accent. "There isn't much hurry, seeing there are no seats taken yet for to-night. Serves Bolter right."

But in spite of her pertness she stood

in some awe of the Princess, and withdrew.

"That is our prima-donna," said the Princess, with a little, anxious smile.

"Is she going to sing to-night?" Beatrix asked, absently.

"No; that is why she is so cross. The manager has not been very fortunate here; and it happened that the people took a fancy to applaud my Donna Anna on Tuesday more than her Zerlina, so it was repeated on Thursday; and to-night we do 'Sonnambula,' in which I play Amina, the only leading part ever entrusted to me. She need not be jealous, for it is only because the people here are not musical, but like Princesses."

"And you have not done well here?" Beatrix said, with such heartfelt sorrow that the Princess simply answered:

"It has nearly ruined us."

"But it will not affect you?"

"It affects me this way: the rest of the company lay the blame on me. They always do. They say I cannot sing, and people don't believe in my title. I have not had notice yet, but it may come any day."

"I should think you would be glad to get away from such people!" exclaimed Beatrix, indignantly.

"One must live—at least, my children must; and there seems no other way. It is all my own fault. I am stupid at learning how to make the others like me. They think I am proud and disagreeable."

"Your children are not here?"

"No; Madame Leclair has them at Brighton. She is a very kind woman who was in this company once."

Beatrix pondered helplessly how to help. She could not offer money to this stately lady, who spoke so simply and quietly of what must be terrific anxieties that no one might presume to imply any need of help. Besides, how could she help? Was it not forbidden?

The Princess turned the conversation to Bigorre, and their subsequent travels. She was very charming, indeed. Beatrix was more than ever fascinated by her simple grace, her proud independence, her unflinching courage. She must indeed be a real Princess, tested as she was, not like Hans Andersen's Princess, by sleeping on a pea, but by the tremendous trial of the imitation diamonds, the squalid surroundings, the usually undignified position of sitting on a bed.

"It is wonderful how you can be so bright all through such a life," Beatrix could not help exclaiming. "You are like a fairy, who can turn the commonest things into gold."

"Oh, no, indeed I am not. I wish I were, and then I should turn myself into somebody clever. It is not only that I should like to sing and act better, but I should learn how to make the singers like me, and I should not be so stupid with my hands. See this room—how untidy! I have never learnt to do without a maid, and I have never made enough money to hire one."

It was only the darkening of the autumn afternoon that reminded Beatrix of the flight of time. She looked at her watch. A quarter past five! Where would Sir Everard be! What could he think of her absence?

She said a hasty good-bye to the Princess, promising to write, forgetting all about her intention of bringing Sir Everard to the opera. She went downstairs alone. On the first landing she met Signor Montefalco. She would have passed him with a bow, but he started with surprise and pleasure, and came up to her.

"Miladi has been to visit our Princess? She intends being present at the 'Son-nambula' to-night? What good fortune to come at the end of such a miserable week!"

"I am afraid I shall not be able to come," she answered, coldly. "I am on my way home now."

Oh, the poor Princess! What a disappointment for her! She had so counted on Lady Treverton's friendship. Might he have the honour of finding her ladyship's carriage?

"I want a cab," she said, shortly, turning to the hall-porter.

Her ladyship should have one in ten minutes.

Ten minutes!

"This is not London," said Montefalco, smiling. "They do not whistle for cabs. It is a serious business ordering one here." Her ladyship could walk to the station in less time. It would quite overwhelm him with honour if he might be allowed to show her the way.

Beatrix was aghast at the assurance of the offer. Then suddenly she bethought herself that he could tell her how to help the Princess, so she accepted his escort. The streets were dark, but full of passengers, none in the least likely to know

her by sight. There was not much time; the station was at the end of the street. She went to the point at once, and held him to it.

She heard of the heavy losses incurred at both Leeds and Coaliquay by the failure of Italian opera to draw. The manager was all but ruined. The company demanded Jonah to be cast into the sea of misfortune to avert utter catastrophe; and the Jonah must be the Princess.

"She is terribly in debt already," Montefalco declared. "She has boarded her boys at Brighton for the whole time of the tour, with directions that they have to have every comfort and luxury of their station. Their station! And they are Princes! She is very brave, she has kept up her courage wonderfully; but this Coaliquay affair has about broken her spirit. She is still only an amateur, or she would not let debt and disappointments distress her so much."

Beatrix was deeply touched by Montefalco's genuine sympathy and enthusiastic admiration for the Princess, who had already told her that he had always been her faithful friend and champion, thus giving, alas! increased strength and bitterness to the jealousy of the women who were all more or less in love with the handsome tenor. If she could only help her! But Montefalco could suggest nothing.

"It is only in romances," he said, "that beautiful, distressed ladies take the world by storm by their talents. She has not voice enough for the operatic stage. She has no dramatic talent."

A light had flashed through Beatrix's mind. Romances! Talents! Had not she talents, now lying useless, while this woman who needed talents had little or none? Were her talents given to her to waste? Was it right to let them rust away? Was it not a sacred duty to use them, if not for herself, for others, like any other riches? From henceforth she would dedicate her pen to charity. She would begin at once; she would finish the half-written Italian story, and the Princess should have the cheque it brought.

In the colonnade before the station she stopped.

"Thank you for bringing me," she said, earnestly. "I will make a promise. I feel guilty of the whole of this last disappointment. If I had stood by her it might have made all the difference. I must make it up to her. Will you tell her that she need not have the least fear

for the future, for herself, or for her children? I know of a way; I cannot tell you yet; I can only assure her that I can manage to keep my promise. I know you have been very good to her, signor. Go on being good to her, and you shall not lose by it. I will do all in my power—"

She stopped, for she did not want to tell him how she meant to help, and she would not for the world have wounded the Princess's delicate pride and her independent spirit by letting her guess she would send money. She wanted them to fancy that her scheme was of influencing managers and the British aristocracy. She had not planned out yet how she would do the deed. In her ignorant kindheartedness she fancied she might persuade managers to engage this third-rate songstress to fill great parts at great salaries which she would augment from the modest amount they considered her abilities were worth. She could not tell him with her lips; but all and more came pouring from her eager, enthusiastic eyes—all the earnest resolve, the vague planning, the longing that filled her, which she could hardly silence.

"Good-bye," she said, smiling gratefully.

"A rivederci," he returned, bowing low over her hand. And Sir Everard from the station entrance saw them under the gaslight.

Beatrice hurried into the station, passing her husband without seeing him in the crowd. He did not follow her; he stood apart, petrified.

Was it possible that such a terrible thing should have happened as that she should have so deceived him? He recognised the Italian at once; he recalled her eagerness to come to Coaliquay this week—this week, advertised on every wall and hoarding as the week of the Italian Opera Company, amongst whom the Princess Castellucca and Signor Montefalco were proclaimed in enormous letters.

He had gone to Mrs. Day's at four, only to hear that her ladyship had engaged a cook before three, and had left at once. He went to the dentist's, to hear that her ladyship had spent a few minutes only there, her tooth not requiring stopping at

present. He had then come to the station to seek her; then gone to keep his appointment with Mr. Gregson, thinking that she must have gone on there before him. Then he had come back to the station; surely she would turn up in time for the 5.40 train.

She had turned up—with Montefalco.

He had watched their emotional parting—her upturned, pleading eyes, his theatrically expressed devotion. He remembered her guilty agitation last night when he had suggested singing lessons.

Last night! That happy evening!

Oh, false! false beyond all words! A traitress who betrayed with kisses! She had been cold and estranged all the week, until she needed to blind and wheedle him.

He would not—he could not return to Oswaldburn with her. Wild thoughts of rushing away by train to some unknown land seized him, or of flinging himself under the next rushing express.

"Oh, Everard, I am so glad. I quite thought I had missed you. Come, we have just time. The parcels are all here. Here is Colonel Blake. How do you do, Colonel? Yes, it will be delightful to travel together."

Sir Everard heard the frank, pleasant voice as if he were waking from a dream. Could he have been mistaken. The stately lady who put her hand on his arm to hurry him to the train even looked so different from the eager girl he saw a minute ago parting from the Italian. There was not time to understand that she had put over her tight little sealskin the long fur cloak she had left in the waiting-room. There was not time to find a reason for not going by that train. Colonel Blake was chattering like a magpie at his left ear about some bye-election just over. Beatrice, on his right arm, was guiding him, like resistless Fate, to the waiting train. The bell was ringing; doors were slamming; porters shouting. It required all his reeling remnant of mind to get out of the way of rushing loads of luggage. He felt like a man in a nightmare, carried away from his will.

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